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[For text illustrating various manifestations of Gullah phonological and grammatical constructions, see Categories 538 and 539.]

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Notes to the Reader

128 PRONUNCIATION OF INDIVIDUAL WORDS, ELISION, and emphasis play almost equal roles in the Negro speech of this section. Except for the spelling of surnames, dialect in the interviews has been faithfully transcribed. Great care has been taken to try to represent the pronunciation, but to have represented literally the elision and emphasis would have made the text unintelligible to the average non-scientific reader. Therefore the elision has been moderated and the emphasis left to the reader. Diacritical marks have not been used because it was thought it would give the text too foreign an appearance, and apostrophes commonly used in dialect have been discarded for simplification. Many variations in pronunciation occur even in a small area; younger members of a community speak differently from older, the better educated differently from the less well educated. Excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses. Almost universally *uh* is substituted for *er* and *d* for *th*, though there are more exceptions to the latter than to the former. An *h* is nearly always substituted for an *r* following a vowel and *ah* is substituted for the terminal *re;* thus *here* becomes *heah*. This latter spelling is as near as can be achieved, and though the diphthong is present the *e* is very short. In certain cases persons have learned to pronounce certain words correctly while other words of the same type will still be spoken in dialect. *Mother* is a common example of this. The *th* in this word has often been deliberately learned

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128 though the final *er* will still be pronounced *uh*. Initial
194 syllables are often pronounced differently from the same
195 syllable occurring in the middle of a sentence. The pronoun *I* at the beginning of a sentence is almost always pronounced correctly, whereas *I* in the middle of the sentence is usually pronounced *uh*. Thus the same word often varies according to its importance and the need of the speaker for emphasis, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Some of the above-mentioned points may not seem worthy of mention to the student familiar with white speech of the same section. But because the white speech has many similarities of pronunciation, it does not make the recorded speech of these studies any less of a dialect nor any less of a variation from standard speech.

128 African parallels will be found in the appendix. These have been grouped according to subjects and the subjects arranged alphabetically and numbered consecutively. Text reference numbers (Arabic) refer to the appendix numbers where pertinent parallels may be found. Where an appendix number is followed by a letter, the parallel under this heading is especially noteworthy. Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns, the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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177 464 Fraser is sensitive to charges that hiring practices are discriminatory. "I get continued crap that we should confine our employment exclusively to people who were born on Hilton Head Island, without regard to their ability or what they do," he complains. "When we had a vice president for personnel, black, college educated, graduate degree in personnel management, we got nothing but hell because he had not been born on Hilton Head Island. This is the sort of crap we get over and over again." Fraser's preference for well-qualified employees to fill upper-echelon positions is understandable. But the fact remains that of all the jobs created by development on the Sea Islands, virtually the only ones which are available to the Sea Islanders themselves are jobs as servants.

177 Even more striking than the economic consequences of development on the indigenous population of the Sea Islands has been its cultural impact. Modernization has caused severe social dislocations. "Developers just come in and roll over whoever is there," charges Emory Campbell, "move them out or roll over them and change their culture, change their way of life, destroy the environment and therefore the culture has to be changed." Perhaps the most intentional vanguard of white cultural imperialism has been the school. Campbell calls for a school system "that is in tune with the culture of the black child of this island. That child's heritage," he notes, "is different from a child who came here from Chicago, New York, or Ohio. And that's where a lot of our white kids are coming from; so you put them in a classroom and say you're integrated and you've got a classroom situation at Hilton Head Elementary School that's oriented to those kids who are moving in." Teachers with little understanding of the islands' rich historical and cultural heritage criticize the island children's Gullah speech—as though the children were the outsiders who speak funny! They do not know that Gullah is a creole language with a very regular syntax and phonology of its own. They do not know that other forms of the islanders' cultural expression are parts of an ancient and beautiful tradition with a rich history behind it. It is little wonder that many Sea Island children—in the face of daily assaults on the way they talk and the way they express themselves—see the school as the enemy, taking away more than it gives. With white dominance of the economic and educational systems some Sea Islanders have become ashamed of their culture. Thus the schools, intended to be the agents of cultural enrichment, have become agents of cultural destruction.

177 871 [193] [194]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

[p. 178 is blank]

193 Under such a schema, locatives and possessives can be seen as related although separate categories. The locatives found by Washabaugh for other creoles, and the benefactives carrying notions of possession in Gullah and other creoles, can be understood as 'locationals' which share important characteristics associated with this abstract grammatical category. As Washabaugh has indicated, the study of emerging creoles may provide valuable information about the possible universal relationships which may obtain between certain grammatical categories. The uses of the fE morpheme in Gullah provide additional evidence for a close relationship between complementizers and case markers.

4.1.2 Variation and Change in the Complementizer in Gullah

The complementizer shows considerable variation between creole and standard forms for older speakers. Most younger speakers use standard forms to and for NP to categorically at present.[2] Those speakers who retain the creole fE as complementizer show variation between the following forms, as well as considerable use of standard forms. No speaker in the data analyzed uses creole and nonstandard forms categorically.

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(194) [2]The phonetic realization of the for in standard for NP to is still [fə]. Most speakers in the region under study reduce or eliminate r in post-vocalic position; vowels become [ə] in unstressed positions, as in other varieties of English.

193
•194 Values for the vowel symbols are as follows:

TURNER:
- i - the vowel sound in meet
- I - the vowel sound in hit
- ɛ - the vowel sound in met
- e - the vowel sound in fate
- ə - the sound of a in Cuba
- ɒ - the vowel sound in not, British pronunciation

CUNNINGHAM & NICHOLS
- E - the vowel sound in but or the unstressed vowel of Cuba

Standard orthography is used for all others.

193 The forms given by Turner seem to be normalized in the direction of what he considered to be the most typically creole form. His texts indicate considerably more variation for his speakers than does his paradigm. The text for Diana Brown of Edisto Island, for example, shows both unə and you used for nominative singular and only you for objective singular, while the paradigm gives only the creole form unə in both positions. For third singular, this informant uses i for all genders, as well as im for masculine gender and it for neuter gender in the nominative case. In the objective case she uses əm for all genders. Cunningham's paradigm shows much greater variation, probably reflecting both her concern to record variant forms and the later date of her study. She does not, however, distinguish between aspirated and unaspirated variants of the nominative and possessive he. The present study makes this distinction on the grounds that the patterns for use of ə and he are of some theoretical interest. The variant forms of the personal pronouns found by both Cunningham and the present study are ordered, left

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2.3. The -*s* morpheme

193 A final factor contributing to the high frequency of verb stems in the basilect and the pre-mesolect is absence of
193 suffixal -*s*. Suffixal -*s* is represented phonetically as [z],
•194 [ɨz] and [s]. The pronunciation variant is dependant on the phonological makeup of the final segment of words to which -*s* is added. When heard as [z] the -*s* follows non-strident voiced segments as in [filz] *feels*; when heard as [ɨz] the -*s* follows a strident consonant as in [mɛtʃɨz] *matches*; and when heard as [s], -*s* follows nonstrident voiceless segments as in [laits] *lights* (Wolfram 1969:134). In English the suffix -*s* is the grammatical marker of third person singular present indicative, the marker of possessive, and the marker of noun plurals.

193 Historically, Gullah has not been marked for subject-verb concord and there is insufficient synchronic data to
[115] suppose that it is marked for it now. Only two of the twenty-one consultants in the study show any traces of concord and these two examples are faulty. The other nineteen reveal no number concord at all. Though the data for this study reveal little linguistic activity in the -*s* suffix category, a review of the quantitative analysis undertaken on the -*s* in Black dialect and Guyanese creole, languages thought to be genetically

193 It precedes the verb or predicate adjective that it marks or it may perform alone as the main verb constituent. It can co-occur with the equating verb /ɪz/, or the locating verb /dɔ/, but the forms do not generally occur together (Cunningham 1970:64). Creole /bɪn/ may be borrowed from English, but it should not be confused with the English past participle *been*. Other than vowel lengthening as in English /bɪ:n/, it is difficult to claim any phonological disparity between them, but semantic and syntactic differences between *been* and /bɪn/ are more clearly defined. English *been* has an invariant grammatical function, to perform primarily as a perfective and past participle of 'be' verbs. Other features associated with its use are (+ PERFECT), (± PASSIVE), (± STATIVE). In some cases it can act as the main verb in constructions such as *He has been here*. But *been* does not occur in standard English without the aid of an auxiliary verb.

193 194 **Unstressed /bɪn/.** When unstressed /bɪn/ signals a completed action in Gullah, the data in this study show this use of /bɪn/ is replaced by *was*. Several constructions show them both occurring in combination:

/ɒɪ wɒz oβə dɛʰ(correction) ɒɪ bɪn oβə dɛʰ/ (6)
'I was over there with them.'

/ɒɪ wɒz bɪn ɹɒŋ dɛʰ/ 'I was around there.' (8)

/dio wɒz pənɪʃ ju (correction) bɪn pənɪʃ ju di βio dio fi·l lɪrk/
'They punished you in the manner they saw fit.' (2)

193 177 The foregoing sentences show one operation of language

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A 193 194 S 193 A (193) 'She is married now and has been married for an extended period of time' (Labov 1972a:54-5). Rickford also observes that /bɪn/, the remote past marker occurring in mesolectal varieties of Gullah, also appears in Black dialect:

Gullah: *I bin had that*
'I've had that for a long time'

Black dialect: *I bin had that plant*
'I've had that plant for a long time'
(Rickford 1974:95)

The data in this study does not support a chiefly mesolectal existence for stressed /bɪn/. The three consultants using the form most frequently also use forms more representative of basilectal Creole, but these speakers are unlikely candidates for social mobility or language change because of their age. This one social factor does not provide a clue concerning the variety of creole from which stressed /bɪn/ originated. Unstressed /bɪn/ continues to appear S (194) in Gullah as the primary past tense indicator. But, for some speakers /bɪn/ is in clear competition with English *was* which suggests some variable movement away from the Creole in the /bɪn/ category.

2.6. /bɪnə/

The preverb /bɪnə/ is an aspect marker. It may signal past progressive, simple past, present perfect, or future perfect progressive. According to Cunningham (1970),

193 it may sometimes perform the functions of the past perfect progressive if the speaker focuses on the action before it was terminated, rather than the fact that it was terminated. Usually the speaker focuses on the latter, and the past perfect progressive is indicated by /dɔŋ/, the perfect marker.

The preverb appears to be a derivative of /bɪn/ + /dɔ/. A counterpart appears in Guyanese, Cameroon and other English creoles:

/dɛt woman bin di sel ndʒaŋgi/ 'That woman sold crayfish (as her job over a period of time)' (Todd 1974:6)

Constructions involving /bɪn/ + /dɔ/ occur infrequently in Gullah; more often one hears the contraction /bɪnɔ/.

194 However, /dɔ/ occurs with stressed /bɪn/ to indicate past progressive:

/ɔɪ bɪn dɔ go/ 'I have been going for some time now.' (1)

The progressive has two variants: /bɪn/ + /ɔ/ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing*. The *-ing* category in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 result primarily from the use of the /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing* form, though the /bɪnɔ/ + VERB form occurs most often:

/bɪnɔ/ + VERB

/ɔɪ bɪnɔ lie dɑŋ sɔm bɪn on mɔɪ hɛɪd/ (8)
'I was lying down and something was on my head.'

/ju dɔ βɔn bɪnɔ dɹiŋk mɔɪ βɑɹɔ ɔl dɔ tɒɪm/ (8)
'You are the one who has been drinking my water all this time.'

/bɪnɔ/ + VERB + *ing*

/i bɪn tiŋk di lɔd βɛn i bɪnɔ goɪn bɔt i bɪn βɪd di hɛp ɔdi gud lɔd βɛn i bɪnɔ kɔmɪn bɔk/
'He was thanking the Lord when he was going but it was with the help of the good Lord when he was coming back.'

193 the replacement, is not only Creole but the pronominal form which Gullah speakers use to mark this category MOST frequently. The fact that some speakers of Gullah 193 194 seldom articulate initial [h] is one reason that phonological change is slow to occur in this category.

Gullah: i tɔk dɪ ho ɛn lɪkom
'He took the hoe and hit him.' (23)

i bɔɔst kɹɔɪ
'He burst out crying.' (23)

i ə̃ nou ɛn i ə̃ kɛ
'He doesn't know and he doesn't care' (15)

193 Unlike the forms marking the masculine subjective case, there are four variants from which Gullah speakers may select markers for the third person feminine nominative case. These variants are /ɪm/, /i/, /hi/ and /ʃi/, all of which correspond to English *she*. The data reveal that /ɪm/ has been either eliminated from the lexicon of these consultants, or that they, for extralinguistic reasons, chose not to use it. Turner's (1949) study indicated that /ɪm/ was a possible pronoun item marking third person feminine nominative case, and Bailey (1966:22) reported that /im/ is the form used to mark the nominative case for all genders in Jamaican Creole. Consequently, /ɪm/ was included in this study as a check for linguistic change.

The most significant linguistic data that are revealed from the study of variants marking the feminine nominative case is that of the 67 times that the consultants selected a third person feminine nominative pronoun, /i/ was selected

193 37 times, /ʃi/ 19 times, and /hi/ 11 times. In total, the Creole form marks this category more than 71% of the time. Likewise, speakers whose performance revealed alternations between /i/ and /hi/ seldom used /ʃi/. Furthermore, /hi/ occurred primarily in stressed positions as an appositive, often AFTER the gender of the person or persons had been specified. Consequently, there could not have been any confusion on the part of the linguist or on the part of the speaker as to whom the speaker referred to when the pronoun /hi/ was used.

[194]

mi maɾə, hi βɔɪn klɔtʃ
'My mother, she was in church.' (2)

βɛl, hi gɪt fɔm lɪɾl ɸo diˢ ol mɛn
'Well, she got home a little before the old man.' (2)

The pronoun /i/ is not only the form used to mark masculine and feminine nominative slots, but is the form most frequently used to indicate third person nominative, neuter gender. The variants marking this position are /ɪm/, /i/, and /ɪt/. /i/ occurred as neuter marker 32 times, contrasted with the 5 occurrences of basilectal /ɪm/, and 1 occurrence of the pronoun /ɪt/. A greater number of speakers chose /ɪm/ rather than /ɪt/ to mark neuter subject.
In light of this data, one can assume that creole neuter subject pronouns are very resistant to change. Even existential is not marked by the English pronoun *it*. As first noted by Turner (1949), /do/ is the form used by Gullah speakers to mark existential where speakers of English use *it*:

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19 [115] 193 in general by supplying extra linguistic data such as the demonstrative pronoun *that one* and the article *a*. Cunningham (1970:22) writes that the definite article *the* may also mark possession, and it is not restricted to marking inalienable possession. Nichols (1976) excluded the possessive pronouns from her analysis because of the infrequency with which they occurred in her data. The following sentences exemplify one way that the consultants appear to avoid these forms:

(8)
so i kɪk ən wʌn, da ɸut ɸtsɪn...
i tak' i ied, n bʌm, dɨ βɔn ɸtsɪn
so i dɣɪs are tiel nɔ

'So he kicked him one (and) his foot fastened.
He took his head and "bam"! His head fastened.
So he just had his tail (free) now.'

As with the nominative case pronouns, the same pattern emerges in the possessive case with /i/ as the general marker for both masculine and feminine pronouns: i i i / i i.

3.3. The Objective Forms

The third person singular objective pronouns show the least amount of change. The /ən/ form is dominant for masculine, feminine and neuter objects. It can be [194] argued that /ən/ is an unaspirated, etymological allomorph of /hɪm/, just as /i/, /ɔɪ/, and /ɪɪ/ are unaspirated allomorphs of /hi/, /hɔɪ/ and /hɪɪ/. However, the data

193 sample indicates that /ɔm/ is perhaps NOT related to /hɪm/ in the superstrate. First, there is a definite phonetic pattern observed in the use of /ɔm/, /ɪm/, and /hɪm/. The mid central vowel /ə/ + /m/ is the general marker used for object position only. When reference is made to a pronoun approximating English *him* the high front vowel /ɪ/ is used, and it occurs only in subject position. [194] Furthermore, /ɪm/ occurs as the unaspirated allomorph of *him* in MASCULINE objective position only. Even then its frequency of occurrence is only 21% as compared to 71.5% occurrence of /ɔm/. Up to this point, the pattern that seems to be emerging is that the Gullah speaker acquires a form, generalizes and saturates each case with this form before going on to another selection, so that each form selected appears in each of the three cases. If /ɔm/ is etymologically connected with /ɪm/, one would perceive its existence in the feminine and neuter categories also. [197] It does not make an appearance, which suggests that by the time Gullah speakers acquire the English objective pronouns in the evolutionary process, they have already made the distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter case markers."

[194] The phonetic difference between /ɪm/ and /ɔm/ is slight, and thus would make /ɔm/ easily replaceable by /ɪm/, and ultimately replaced by the pre-aspirated allomorph /hɪm/. [114] The evidence indicates that /ɔm/ is still the only pronominal form marked for case, which is

193 position (Turner 1949:228). It is characteristic of
197 Atlantic creole languages to display a reduced distinction of third person singular pronouns.

Contact between language systems caused a change in the Stage I pattern, and Turner's data indicates that discrimination of gender occurred first in the neuter subject before taking place in the human subjects.

Stage II: ɪm ɪm i / ɪm ɪm / ɔn ɔn ɔn

One theory that can be proposed is that neuter /i/ was linearly transferred intra-categorically to the masculine and feminine forms before making other changes in the objective categories. Stage III is essentially the same undifferentiated gender as Stage I:

Stage III: i i i / ɪm ɪm / ɔn ɔn ɔn

I attribute this change to partial selection, where Gullah speakers approximated the contact language's pre-aspirated /(h)i/ and incorporated it intra-categorically into their genderless mold, to make minimal adjustments to accommodate the new form.

i ɛ̃ bene kom bɛk til die klɪn (3)
'She didn't come back until morning.'

Only in Stage IV does Gullah reveal a system identifiable with Bickerton's Stage I:

Stage IV: i i i / i i / ɔn ɔn ɔn (Gullah)

As exemplified by the survey, the consultants involved in this study use the Stage IV system.

• [194) /i/ marking feminine subject is being replaced by

193 some Gullah speakers who now add the palato-alveolar frica-
193 tive /ʃi/ while /i/ as masculine and neuter marker is
• [194] still used.

Stage V: i ʃi i / im im / om om om

000 At this stage in Guyanese Creole, Bickerton says that gender differentiation is interrupted as the change process recognizes the salience of /am/ in the object. He considers it salient because it is the only basilectal form in the system which is not perceived to be present in the acrolect. His claim seems inconsistent with the data for creoles. He argues that the principle of least effort ASSURES that replacement of a form will PRECEDE rather than ACCOMPANY a form differentiating gender; and that a form already in the system will constitute the replacement. He concludes that gender differentiation takes place next in the neuter subject:

Stage IV: i shi it / i i / i shi i
(Model for Guyanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

This claim seems inconsistent with the data for some creole
193 languages. It does not parallel the developmental process for pronouns in Gullah because *it* as object pronoun seldom, if ever, occurs in the speech of the consultants in this study.

19 Stage VI: i ʃi i / im im / om ʃi om

Gender is distinguished in the object by the transference of the existing form /ʃi/ from the nominative to the object slot. Then, /om/ is replaced by /ʃi/, A FORM

193 Unlike the feminine, there are high numbers in the cells for the column marked THIRD PERSON MASCULINE POSSESSIVE. One speaker shows usage of /i/, /ɪz/ and /hɪz/, though most speakers have marked this category with /i/. It is significant that speakers 8 and 3 leave both masculine and feminine possessive case unmarked. It is significant because it adds more credibility to possessive cases being unmarked by pronouns in the basilect.

[197] The pronominal system shows the least amount of change in the masculine, feminine and neuter objective case. All the consultants continue to use /ɛm/ regardless of gender on sex-reference. It is my belief that the objective slot is the only one still marked for case.

193 197 The greatest degree of change has occurred in the nominative case. Five of the nine consultants have acquired a rule for aspirating /i/ to produce English *he*, but the rule is not stable. Of the 165 times that the masculine subject appears in the data, 78% were marked with /i/ and only 19% were marked with aspiration (/hi/). The fluctuation and variability between /i/ and /hi/ where there has been no variation historically is indicative of linguistic change within a creole configuration. Turner 193 records /hɪm/ 'him' as the only pronominal form appearing •194 with aspiration in Gullah. Five of the consultants in 197 this study are moving toward aspiration of other forms, particularly /hi/. The change, however, is only a phonological manifestation of an underlying Creole grammar

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193 rule because /hi/ is a form used to refer to both male
194 and female in Gullah.
197

The /h/ is not entirely lacking in Gullah. Turner offers a list of personal names and words with initial /h/ derived from source languages such as Vai, Mende, Twi, Fon, Wolof and others (Turner 1949:93-94). The appearance of /h/ at least in some consultants' speech indicates that it was phonemic historically in West African words but it is now deleted initially in the pronunciation of English words. The appearance or non-appearance
(197) of /h/ in present-day Gullah may result from (1) a convergence and vocabulary borrowing from English, (2) a slow spread of /h/ from West African source languages to English words, or (3) the loss of initial /h/ with the subsequent loss of West African words and its reacquisition with English replacements.

193 There is no apparent change at all in neuter subject.
197 The pronoun *it* is yet to be acquired in the pronominal system of these consultants. However, change is activated in the third person feminine subjective case. Three of
(197) the speakers are acquiring the English palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] to mark feminine gender, /ʃi/, while none of the speakers use /ɪm/, a more basilectal form, to mark this position. Though these three speakers use *she*, they use /i/ and /hi/ to mark feminine as well. Eight out of nine marked nominative third person feminine with /i/, while five out of nine marked feminine with /hi/.

CHAPTER 4

•194 The sound system is a system of features which asserts the uniqueness of Gullah apart from Enqlish. The phonology differs in several respects from that of English, showing a noticeable resemblance to the sound system of other Atlantic Creoles, particularly Jamaican and Sierra Leone. The phonemes of Gullah are described and compared with these and other Atlantic creoles as well as with inland Black dialect and other varieties of English where comparison is possible.[1]

The treatment of the segmental phonemes is based on phonetic transcriptions of speech samples from seven consultants selected from among those participating in the verb and pronoun survey. These seven were selected because (1) they represent a range of social and economic backgrounds; (2) they are representative of the speech community; and (3) they offer a variety of narrative styles. The orthography is based primarily on symbols suggested by the International Phonetic Association.

The Consonants within Morphemes

p	-	[pien]	'pain'	-	[pɛ]	'father'
b	-	[biek]	'bake'	-	[bɔɪ]	'boy'
t	-	[tiŋ]	'thing'	-	[tɔŋ]	'town'
d	-	[dɒɪ]	'die'	-	[dɾβəl]	'devil'
k	-	[kɔɸɪm]	'coffin'	-	[kɹɔk]	'crook'
g	-	[gɾt]	'got'	-	[gɔ̃n]	'went'
f	-	[fɪks]	'lay in wait'		[nof]	'enough'

•194

	Labials	Apicals	Velars	Glottal
Stops	p	t	k	ʔ
	b	d	g	
Fricatives	ɸ(f)	s(ʃ)(ɕ)		
	β(v)	ɤ		ɦ
Affricates		tʃ		
		dʒ(ʒ)		
Nasals	m	n	ŋ	
Lateral		l		
Retroflex		r		
Semi-vowels		j	w	

TABLE 4.1. CONSONANTS OBSERVED IN GULLAH
Significant allophones are in parentheses

The consonants within morphemes, continued.

ɸ	-	[ɸɤ̈in]	'frighten'	-	[ɸieβ̈]	'fever'
β	-	[βe]	'where'	-	[βie]	'way'
s	-	[speit]	'spirit'	-	[bigɪs]	'biggest'
ɸ	-	[ɸiəm]	'see them'	-	[ɸɤi]	'tree'
ɤ	-	[ɤiezn]	'raisin'	-	[ɤiez]	'raise'
ʃ	-	[ʃɒin]	'shine'	-	[æʃ]	'marsh'
dʒ	-	[iedʒ]	'edge'	-	[iedʒ]	'age'
h	-	[huk]	'holler'	-	[hom]	'home'
tʃ	-	[tʃekɪn]	'catching'	-	[tʃɛtʃ]	'church'
m	-	[mäsə]	'master'	-	[ʃiem]	'shame'
n	-	[nɔ̃u]	'now'	-	[nuo]	'no'
ŋ	-	[dɔŋ]	'down'	-	[ɤɔŋ]	'round'
l	-	[lɔɪ]	'lie'	-	[kuol]	'cold'
ɤ	-	[ɤɪβə]	'river'	-	[ɤien]	'rain'
w	-	[wud]	'wood'	-	[wəɾə]	'water'
j	-	[jɒudə]	'yonder'	-	[jiet]	'yet'

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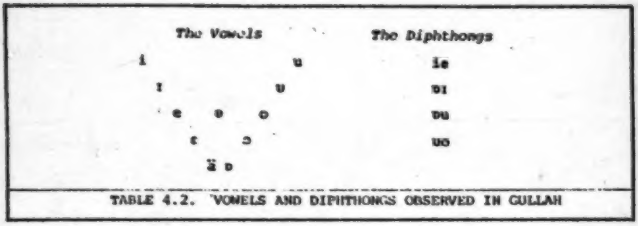

TABLE 4.2. VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS OBSERVED IN GULLAH

The Vowels within Morphemes

i	-	[tit]	'teeth'	-	[θri]	'three'
ɪ	-	[jɛrɪ]	'hear'	-	[bɪn]	'was'
e	-	[βe]	'where'	-	[eg]	'egg'
ɛ	-	[dɛk]	'dark'	-	[kɛt]	'cart'
ɜ̈	-	[tʃɜ̈is]	'choice'	-	[ɜ̈is]	'ice'
ɒ	-	[ɒre]	'other'	-	[pɒt]	'Pat'
ɔ	-	[kɔmis]	'come'	-	[sɔk]	'sock'
o	-	[oβe]	'over'	-	[do]	'door'
ʊ	-	[gʊd]	'good'	-	[kʊk]	'cook'
u	-	[unɒ]	'you'	-	[but]	'boot'

4.0. Descriptions of the Vowels

/i/ is a tense high front vowel in Gullah which closely resembles cardinal 1.

/ɪ/ [ɪ] is a lax, high front vowel produced by retracting the tongue from its position in the articulation of cardinal 1 to a position slightly above cardinal 2. There are two allophones of /ɪ/:

•194 1. A centralized retracted variant occurring, for example, after /g/ as in [məgɡɪ'] 'monkey'.
2. a short allophone occurring medially as in [jɛstɪdie] 'yesterday' and word-finally, as in the name [kusɪ] Cutsey.

/e/ is seldom a clear cardinal sound in Gullah. It is most often diphthongized to [ie], though consultant 6 uses [ei] as a variant pronunciation. Turner (1949) described /e/ as slightly higher than cardinal 2. Possibly the sound that he heard was influenced by cardinal 1, the first member of the diphthong pair. The diphthongization of /e/ occurs also in Jamaican and Sierra Leone Creoles, and the following words are pronunçed in all three languages as:

[kiek]	'cake'
[liet]	'late'
[pien]	'pain'

Such pronunciations reinforce the claim that these languages are historically related.

/ɛ/ [ɛ] is a mid-front vowel in Gullah very close to cardinal 3. A short and more open allophone occurs word-finally and before nasals, which results in words such as 'care' [kɛ] and 'can't' [kɛ̃t] becoming minimal pairs in Gullah. A rounded variant of /ɛ/ appears between homorganic stops and before /l/, e.g.

•194 [dɛ̤dɪ] 'daddy', [βɛ̤l] 'well'.

/a/ The low front vowel is often centralized in Gullah. An allophone slightly above cardinal 4 is heard medially between a stop and post-alveolar /ɾ/. Older consultants frequently substitute [ɑ] for [a], the vowel heard in received English pronunciation in the words *dark, car, hard,* and *cart*. These and words with similar morpheme structure were pronounced with a raised [ɑ̝] or [ɛ] by all consultants when requested to pronounce the words in the manner of the 'old time talk'. But pronunciation with [ɑ] and [ɛ] is stigmatized, and the newer pronunciation with [a] is gaining acceptance. Reed Smith (1926:27) recorded a similar pronunciation for Gullah in 1926. The present analysis indicates that the unusual pronunciation still continues. Jones notes the substitution of [a] by [ɑ] in Krio as well:

sharp	shap	
market	makit	
bark	bak	
lard	lad	(Jones 1971:72)

(Jones' symbols have been altered to conform with my own. The values, of course, are the same.)

/ɔ/ In Gullah, /ɔ/ is a low back vowel similar to cardinal 5, pronounced with or without lip rounding.[13] It is normally the reflex of General American English /ɑ/ and /ɔ/, e.g.

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[ɸɒɾə] 'water', [ɛɸibɒɾi] 'everybody', [ɒɾə] 'other'. /ɒ/ occurs as the first member of the diphthong pair /ɒu/, e.g. [ɔjɒundə] 'yonder'. Speakers 24 and 2 use the raised central vowel [ɵ] instead of [ə] when the diphthong /ɒu/ is followed by a voiceless consonant, e.g. [ɒbɒʊt] 'about'. These speakers likewise use the raised central vowel [ɵ] as a variant pronunciation of /ɒɪ/, e.g. [dɒɪn] 'dying', [lɒɪɸ] 'life'.

/ɔ/ The back vowel /ɔ/ closely resembles cardinal 6 in Gullah. A centralized allophone occurs before nasals in words such as [sɤ̈mbɔdɪ] 'somebody' and [mɤ̈nɪn] 'morning'. If a velar nasal appears following [ɔ] and in syllable final position, the nasal is often completely assimilated by the preceding vowel, e.g. [dɔ̃] 'down', [tɔ̃] 'town'. An identical assimilation process involving velar nasals following back vowels occurs in the following creoles:

	'down'	'town'
Gullah	dɔŋ	tɔŋ
Jamaican	doŋ	toŋ
Cameroon	dɔŋ	tɔŋ
Guyanese	dɔŋ	tɔŋ

(Unlike other Atlantic creoles, Krio shows [m] in English /aun/ sequences.)

/o/ [o] is a mid back vowel very close to cardinal 7. Consultants 3, 8 and 5 use a centralized allophone

•194 in connected speech, as in [gõʊ̯ʊ̈ɐzɒːd] 'go for a ride'. But /o/ is generally diphthongized in Gullah and Jamaican creoles as a reflex of English /o/:

[kʊʊt] 'coat'
[nʊʊ] 'no'
[mʊʊ] 'more'

/ʊ/ [ʊ] is a high back vowel in Gullah produced with more lip rounding that /u/ of the American English /kʊk/ 'cook'.

/ʉ/ In Gullah [ʉ] is a high back rounded vowel very close to cardinal 8. A less retracted variant appears after palatals and alveolars, e.g. [dʒʉk] 'to poke', and [dʉkɪ] 'feces'.

/ə/ In Gullah the mid central vowel has two variants:
1. a short unstressed allophone which occurs initially, e.g. [ə'ɹɔɳ] 'around';
2. a longer retracted allophone which occurs medially and word-finally, e.g. [bɐzəd] 'buzzard', [də] 'the locative verb'. Turner (1949) noted that [ʌ] was being replaced by [ə']. The data for this study indicate that, with the exception of speakers 3, 6 and 24 (who occasionally use [ʌ] and [ə'] interchangeably) the replacement of [ʌ] by [ə'] is almost complete. English words ending with /ə/, such as *pencil*, *devil*, and *apple* are pronounced in Gullah and Krio as /u/:

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Krio	Gullah
[dɛbul]	[dɛβul]
[pɛnsul]	[pɛnsul]
[apul]	[apul]

/w/ The semi-vowel [w] alternates with the bilabial approximant [β] before front vowels, e.g. [βie] 'where', [βen] 'when'.

/j/ The semi-vowel [j] is approximately the sound heard in English *yet*, e.g. [jiːɛi] 'hear'.

4.1. The Diphthongs

The diphthongs [ie ɒː ou uo] occur in Gullah. The falling diphthing [ie] is a reflex of English /e/, and is heard more often in Gullah than [e]. When [ie] follows a consonant, the consonant is always strongly palatalized, e.g. [pien] 'pain', [ɛiem] 'see them'. Krio and Jamaican Creole also follow this palatalization process.

In English words where /ai/ is heard in received pronunciation, Gullah speakers use [ɒː], e.g. [dɒː] 'die', [nɒːt] 'night'. When [ɒː] is preceded by the consonants [j] and [b], a more advanced and centralized variant appears, so that *John* and *join*, *boil* and *bile* are homophones, e.g. [jäːn], [bäːl].

194 The rising diphthong [ɔu] is heard most frequently in words ending in *ou*, e.g. [nɔu] 'now', [plɔu] 'plow'.

The slightly falling diphthong [uɔ] is heard most frequently in Gullah and Jamaican Creole as an allophone of /o/, e.g. [nuɔ] 'no', [guɔs] 'ghost'.

19 4.2. The Consonants

/p/ [p] is a voiceless bilabial stop which occurs initially without aspiration for speakers 3, 6, 8 and 13. Other speakers aspirate [pʰ] initially. An unusual kind of stop called an EJECTIVE is heard in the speech of consultants 6 and 8, in the words [pʔɔt] 'pot' and [tʔɛk] 'take'. The sound is produced when air is released from the glottis and the mouth almost simultaneously. As air flows from the mouth, it is followed immediately by the sharp popping sound of the glottis opening. A palatalized variant of /p/ is always heard before the diphthong [ie] as in [pien] 'pain'.

/b/ The voiced bilabial stop is often unvoiced when it appears in final syllables, e.g. [biebi] 'baby', but it is undetermined if devoicing occurs in /d/ and /g/ as well. Consultants 3, 12 and 23 sometimes use an implosive [ɓ] initially, e.g. [ɓɔn] 'born'.

19 sensitive. The entire cluster is eliminated when the following morpheme begins with a stop, sibilant, or a glide. When the following morpheme begins with a vowel, one but not both members may be retained. Most often the nasal is assimilated by a preceding vowel and the /t/ is eliminated:

du ɜnɔm ɸo mi	'Do hunt it for me.'	(23)
ɒɪ ə̃ no	'I don't know.'	(1)

When consonant clusters have the same point of articulation in Black dialect, only the final member is deleted (Labov et al.; Lueldorff 1970).

meant	*men*
sent	*sen*
ain't	*ain*

In stressed position, /nt/ is articulated in Gullah, e.g. [ẽnti] 'isn't it', where its appearance is also favored by a following vowel.

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/d/ The voiced alveolar stop has several allophones in Gullah. It is heard:

1. as a lingual flap intervocalically: [oɾɪs] 'oldest'
2. as a retroflex before /l/: [bäɖl] 'battle'
3. as an implosive initially: [ɗɔg] 'dog'
4. as a palatal before front vowels: [ɟie] 'day'.

The data for this analysis show that in Gullah and other Atlantic creoles /d/ is generally the reflex of initial and intervocalic *th*: [dɪ] 'the', [mäɾə]

•194 'mother'. Dillard (1972) claims that there is a stylistic alternation among Black speakers in the use of [v] and [d], with [v] as the more elegant usage. Though I have not observed the elegant and inelegant alternation, I have noticed that most words with intervocalic voiced *th* are pronounced [d] in the South, while many northern Black dialect speakers pronounce intervocalic voiced *th* as [v]. In his 1949 study, Turner recorded intervocallic voiced [197] *th* as [v] in Gullah. The speech is known to differ on each island, which may account for the /d/ ~ /v/ variation.

/k/ [k] is a voiceless velar stop which is palatalized before high front vowels in Gullah. This process sometimes results in words such as *cake* and *kiok* becoming homophones for some speakers. Consultants 2, 3 and 23 often substitute the voiceless affricate /tʃ/ for /k/ before front vowels and words beginning with *c* as in [tʃies] 'case' and [tʃies] 'chase', words which are homophones in Krio and for some Gullah speakers. Speakers 3 and 24 often interchange the /k/ and /tʃ/ sounds in the words [tʃɛkin] 'catching' and [klɔtʃ] 'church'. Like /p/ and /t/, a slightly glottalized /k/ appears in some words, e.g. [kʔɛbidʒ] 'cabbage'.

•194 /g/ [g] is a voiced velar stop which in Gullah, Jamaican Creole and Krio is palatalized before high front vowels, e.g. [g̟iet] 'gate'. After velar nasals, [g] is substituted for [k] as in the word *monkey*, pronounced by most Gullah speakers as [mɔŋg] or [mɔŋgi].

[ʔ] Glottal stops do not appear to be phonemic in Gullah, but the observation may be significant to the study of other creoles that a glottal stop is heard frequently in the speech of consultants 1, 3, 4 and 6, preceding and following low centralized and low back vowels, e.g. [ʔɔɸɔ] 'after', and [ʔɔɾɛmɔbil] 'automobile'. A stop also appears after word-final nt clusters when the final member is dropped, e.g. [hɔnʔ] 'hunt'.

/ɸ/ [f] The consultants in this study alternate the labiodental voiceless fricative [f] with the bilabial voiceless approximant [ɸ]. When followed by schwa, before and after high front vowels [f] and [ɸ] appear in free variation, but before /ɹ/ and low front, and back vowels, [ɸ] is used.

/β/ The bilabial voiced approximant occurs intervocalically, and in words where English uses /b/, /v/, and /w/, e.g. [βie] 'way', [haβ] 'have', [dɛβɔl] 'devil'.

●194 Lawton (1963:40) observes that [v] does not occur in Jamaican Creole, but is replaced by the bilabial approximant: [loβ] 'lover'. The [v] does not appear in the data for this study. Gullah has a peculiar palatalized allophone of /β/ before /i/, as in [βie] 'weight'. The phonemes /ɸ/ and /β/ are possibly sounds that early writers of Black dialect such as Edgar Allan Poe heard as /b/, e.g. *debbil, gib* and *hab* in *The Gold Bug*. The sounds are unusual for English, but Turner (1949:212) offers an explanation for their occurrence in Gullah:

> The bilabial fricative is foreign to English, but is found in several West African languages spoken in those areas from which the Gullahs were brought to the United States as slaves. In some of these languages, the bilabial sounds occur, but the labio-dentals [f] and [v] do not. In others, however, the bilabial fricatives occur side by side with the labio-dentals. In Yoruba, Hausa, Efik and Twi, there is no [v].

/s/ The voiceless alveolar fricative has three allophones in Gullah:

1. a palatalized variant appearing before high front vowels: [ʂiəm] 'same';

2. a voiceless palato-alveolar [ʃ] occurring initially before high, low, front and back vowels: [ʃɔm] 'see them'; and

3. an alveolar palatal [ɕ] appearing most often before high front vowels: [ɕiəm] 'see them. [ɕ] often replaces English /t/ before /ɹ/. When it does, *tree*

•194 and *three* become homophones pronounced [ɵɜi]. Consultant 1 pronounces the word *shrimp* [ɵimps], but most Gullah speakers pronounce the word [ɵiβimps], which is consistant with the pronunciation of some inland Black dialect speakers that I have heard.

[h] The voiceless glottal fricative is often omitted initially in Gullah. A voiced variant [ɦ] occurs only in stressed positions, and is produced with forceful egressive flow, e.g. [ɦom] 'home'. The [h] is rare in most English- and French-based creoles. When it is pronounced, it is pronounced mainly in initial position. Though /h/ is often deleted in English, it does not have the same phonemic status in the creoles. Since [h] is not phonemic in Gullah, Jamaican Creole and Krio, creolists are (according to Lawton 1963:40) faced with setting up a 'floating' phoneme or not setting it up. The [h] may or may not be present before vowels and is often absent when one expects to find it, e.g. [ᵃaba] 'harbor'. There are no minimal forms in which [h] is distinctive, and to set up [h] as phonemic, Lawton concludes, violates the linguistic facts.

/tʃ/ The voiceless palato-alveolar affricate occurs in words such as [tʃɐtʃ] 'church'. A strongly palatalized variant appears before high front vowels: [tʃia]

•194 'chair'.

/dʒ/ The voiced counterpart of /tʃ/ is heard in [iedʒ] 'age' and [iedʒ] 'edge', homophones in Gullah. Before front vowels and low central vowels, the voiced palatal stop [ɟ] is heard as an allophone of /dʒ/, e.g. [ɟɛksɔn] 'Jackson', [ɟizəs] 'Jesus'.

/m/ The voiced bilabial nasal occurs in words such as [mɔn] 'man', [ŋiem] 'name' and [ɪzamɪn] 'examine'.

/n/ The voiced alveolar nasal is replaced with [m] by speakers 1, 3 and 23 when it occurs at the end of some words, e.g. [pɛ̃tɛɪɔm] 'pattern', [ɸom] 'phone'. This substitution is apparent in Black dialect also. Speaker 8 substitutes /l/ for /n/ in the word *chimney* [tʃɪmli].

/ŋ/ The velar nasal is heard in Gullah and other Atlantic creoles in medial and final position:

Gullah	*Guyanese*	*Jamaican*	*Krio*	*English*
liedɔŋ	ledɔ́ŋ	lidɔŋ	lidɔ́m	lay down
tiŋk	tiŋk	tiŋk	tiŋk	thing
tɔŋ	tɔŋ	tɔŋ	tɔŋ	town

In these languages /ŋ/ is frequently assimilated by a preceding vowel, e.g. [dɔŋ] → [dɔ̃] 'down'.

● 194 /l/ The voiced alveolar lateral is generally clear. Speakers 3 and 6 use a velarized [ɫ] in the words [fiɫin] 'feeling' and [juɫ] 'you will'.

/ɹ/ The voiced post-alveolar approximant is lost after a vowel in Gullah as it is in some dialects of English. Consultant 3 uses a uvular flap when he pronounces words with English reflexes spelled *thr-*: [tʁo] 'throw'. But /ɹ/ is seldom pronounced word-finally in Gullah. While r-lessness is a feature of Boston, New York, Richmond, Charleston and other English dialects, according to Labov (1972:13) Black dialect speakers show a higher degree of r-lessness in their speech and are also known to use /l/ and /ɹ/ in alternation, e.g. [meli] 'Mary', which happens also in Gullah and Jamaican Creole. The /l/ and /ɹ/ alternnation is not a feature of English dialects, but Cassidy notes that it is a feature of English contact languages. Turner observed the variation and attempted to explain it:

> This substitution may be due to the fact that in many African language, including Kongo, Umbundu, Bobangi, Tshiluba, and others, from the vocabularies of which many Gullahs use a large number of words, [r] does not occur at all. In some other African languages [l] and [r] are interchangeable. In the Mandingo languages, for example the word for 'mountain' is *kule* or *kuru*. In the Kru language the word for 'knee' is *kulu* or *kuru*, and both *blablo* and *brabre* are used for 'sheep'. (1949:243)

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194 /z/ The voiced alveolar fricative is a reflex of English /z/: [hɔz] 'house', [ɸziz] 'freeze'.

4.3. The Texts

128 539 The following texts are included in this study primarily to show the language in context. The selections offer a range of speech styles and topics which manifest many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of Creole languages. The English version accompanying each transcription obscures many of the Creole patterns. Consequently, an attempt is made to present a word-for-word translation which corresponds with each line of phonetic script. This procedure is more [193] amenable for illustrating underlying Creole constituents such as the complementizer /fo/, the introductory verb /sie/, the future marker /go/ and many constructions other than those specified in this study.

[194] The selected passages reveal specific segmental phonological phenomena such as vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for English phones such as /ƀ/ and /w/; /ɸ/ and /f/; /t/ for initial /ð/ and /θ/; and /o/ and /ʃ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, [126] deviant words, or stuttering. Occasionally, it has been extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of

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193 7. Some consultants who aided in the pronoun survey
115 participated in a very informal 'story-telling' contest
124 for which a prize was awarded to the one who told the most interesting tale. The stories were recorded and a frequency count was taken of third person singular pronouns as they occurred.

193 8. I consider /ɔn/ the most basilectal form for Gullah because, of the variants filling third person feminine objective slot, /ɔn/ is least like the form used in the acrolect. The /i/ form appeared in the objective slot infrequently, but it is not regarded as a performance error because it occurs in this position in Guyanese and Jamaican Creoles. It may be a stage in pronominal acquisition, but it may not be a stage that all speakers go through. *She* is considered mesolectal because it would seem to indicate that a speaker has acquired one acrolectal form to distinguish male from female.

193 9. Different intonation patterns were observed with
•194 each tense. Unfortunately, I was not able to capture this
[126] on tape. The consultant assured me that all of the contexts were possible.

19 10. There were only six tokens of /i/ counted in this category. The form [hiːɛɸ] 'himself' occurs in the data to mark third person feminine possessive as well as third person masculine possessive. It was not included with the other forms because I perceived it to be used by

speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /ɔ/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

14. *Hag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders. It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house—a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses the English past tense marker along with the Creole *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

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THE DIALECT

197 What the Gullahs seem to have done was to take a sizeable part of the English vocabulary as spoken on the coast by the white inhabitants from about 1700 on, wrap their tongues around it, and reproduce it changed in tonality, pronunciation, cadence, and grammar to suit their native phonetic tendencies, and their existing needs of expression and communication. The result has been called by one writer "the worst English in the world". It would certainly seem to have a fair claim to that distinction. To understand it requires a trained ear, and at first blush it is equally unintelligible to white people and colored people alike.

[194] [193] "The ordinary reader," says Mr. Bennett, "may not always catch the meaning; the shapes of the words are strange; they are the residuum of language literally worn away by use; the phonology is archaic; the engaged grammar a mystery; to the wit and to the acute phonetic sense of the reader much must inevitably be left.""

It is easy to understand the bewilderment of a northern visitor to the South just after the war who fell in with a crowd of Negro refugees on the wharves in Charleston. "I tried to converse with others," he writes, "who spoke a wild jargon peculiar to the plantations, of which I understood hardly one word in ten."" White housekeepers in Georgetown, Charleston, and Beaufort have been heard at the present day to lament the fact that they could not understand their own cooks, which is but one way of confessing that they are not native, but have moved in from the up-country.

One of the funniest things I ever saw was a fashionable colored nurse-maid from the up-country listening for the first time to a Gullah cook and a Gullah fisherman on Pawley's Island arguing over the price of a string of fish. As the flood of Gullah vocables burst around her ears the up-country negro's expression was a study in mingled amazement and incredulity: she couldn't believe her own ears!

[118] "I, 377.
"J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866, p. 533.

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on their part just as much interested in and amused by up-country talkers, white or black. Plantation Negroes delight, though not appearing to do so, to watch a visiting stranger: "Dey use dem mout' so funny!"[a]

To come to the dialect itself, and to single out some of its most interesting features,[b] be it always kept in mind that Gullah is uniformly a spoken not a written speech. It lacks entirely any of the influences associated with writing or printing. It is untouched by the scratch of a pen save as it was recorded in transit, so to speak, by Mrs. Christensen, Colonel Jones, Mr. Gonzales, and others.

Both on this account and also because it has had to muddle along without the standardizing effects of education, in it all the leveling and simplifying processes possible to language have had free sway.[c] Furthermore, when it was first formulated as a medium of communication between master and slave, it was almost certainly a highly simpli-

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[a] Bennett I, 340.

[b] In this connection two important preliminary comments should be made.

(1) It is not meant that these features are unique in Gullah: some are, but many are not. Many of the grammatical usages, pronunciations, popular etymologies, proverbs, etc., are found in similar dialects elsewhere, and occasionally in general Negro usage or even in white usage in the South. For example F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1903, gives the Sierra Leone Negro dialect wherein may be found many interesting parallels with Gullah. Compare also the remarks of Professor Krapp below, Note 46. Parsons, also, (Preface XVIII) gives several Bahaman parallels such as *day-clean*, *man* as a form of address, *do* as a supplicatory exclamation, and in Note 5 mentions further Sierra Leone parallels, *um* (them), *too* (very), *ainbe* (South Carolina *ent*), *yone* (eye), *titta*, (sister), and *oonuh* (you).

Likewise Mr. Bennett throughout his two articles (especially I, pp. 346, 347) calls attention to various parallels in Middle and Elizabethan English and in the peasant usage of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Sussex and Kent.

(2) Again, there was (and is) no standard Gullah in the sense that there is a standard literary English. As Mr. Bennett explains: "Gullah has its variants, as naturally followed from the constrained remoteness of distant plantations and absence of intercourse; phrases heard on the Altamaha are unknown upon the Santee; words in use in the Georgetown District vanish at Edisto; John's Island is not St. Helena's; Silk Hope was not Toogoodoo." (I, 341). Moreover, the particular method of reducing the dialect to writing, especially the degree to which phonetic spelling is carried, causes many variations among the different writers of the dialect. It is interesting to compare, for example, the Beaufort Gullah of Mrs. Christensen and John G. Williams, the Georgetown Gullah of J. Jenkins Hucks, the Combahee Gullah of Gonzales, the St. Helena dialect of Parsons, and the Edisto dialect of Marcellus S. Whaley.

An interesting example of the differences in Negro dialects is contained in Addison Hibbard's "Æsop in Negro Dialect," *American Speech*, June, 1926.

[c] Writing in 1867, W. F. Allen, one of the compilers of *Slave Songs in the United States*, says: "With these people the process of 'phonetic decay' appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible."

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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193 may mean "See it, him, them?" The height of laconicism is achieved in

"Shum?"
"Shum!"

Uh yeddy 'um but 'uh ent shum may have any of the sixty-four possible combinations:

I {hear / heard} {it / her / him / them} but I {didn't / don't} see {it / her / him / them}

One of the most convenient and expressive words in Gullah is the interrogative or affirmative exclamation *enty*, equivalent to the German *Nichtwahr* or the French *N'est-ce pas?* It means "isn't, aren't, didn't, doesn't, don't, you, she, it, they, we," etc., etc. *Enty you shum?* or *You shum, enty?*

Gullah "A"

• 194 To unaccustomed ears, the most characteristic and peculiar sound in Gullah is the prevalence of the narrow or flat sound of *a* as in "at" "hat" "bat", drawled or prolonged to *"aa"*. This sound on Gullah tongue represents both the median and broad *a* sounds, and gives *paa't* for both path or part; *smaa't* for smart; *cyaa't* for cart; *haa't* for heart; and similarly *shaa'p, baa'n, maa'k, staa't, daa'k, yaa'd*, etc. As Mr. Bennett remarks: "To hear a small black girl, striving after the higher education but forever indelibly saturated with Gullah, recite the inspired line, 'Hark! hark! the lark!' as 'Haa'k! haa'k! de laa'k!' is inevitably to smile."[9]

Conversely the narrow or flat sound of *a* as in "fat", "hat," "rat," etc., is broadened to *o* or *ah*,[10] giving *ha(h)t* for hat, *ca(h)t* for cat, *ba(h)g* for bag, and *ba(h)k, cra(h)k, fa(h)c'* and *ma(h)n* for back, crack, fact, and man. By this reversal of *a* sounds, curious results follow.

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[9] Bennett II, 42.
[10] Not exclusively Gullah, but also impeccable white low-country usage.

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Thus, a "smart man" becomes a *smaa't ma(h)n*, and a "dark bag" becomes a *daa'k ba(h)g*. 194

Consonant Shifts

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Voiced *th* (as in *then*) > *d*

Aldo', anudduh, dat, den, dey dey (right there), bodduh, todduh (t'other), demself.

Voiceless *th* (as in *thin*) >t, either initial or final.

T'ick, t'in, t'ing, t'ink, t'ief, t'irty, t'istle, t'irteen, t'row, t'roat, t'ree, t'rough.

Eart' (or yut'), bre't', fait', trut', teet', lat' (lathe), pat', wut (worth).

r > *h*

Bittle (victuals), beabuh, bee-hibe, Benus (sometimes Wenus), behabe, berry (sometimes werry) 'ceebin (deceiving), grabe, hebby, driber, drobe, Ebe, ebenin', fabuh, leabe, lib', libe, febuh, fibe, flabuh, glub, moobe.

v > *w*

Wenus (sometimes Benus), werry (sometimes berry), Nowembuh, puhwidin', puhwiduh, puhwishun, puhwoke, puhwokin', waa'mint (varmint), wegetubble, westibule (of vestibule limited train), wictoria, wine, wineguh, wisit.

z > *dj*

Medjuh, pledjuh, pledjuhr'um (pleasure him or them), tredjuh, tredjuruh.

R, of course, drops[a] or softens to *h*, except intervocalically as in *tredjuruh*, and *fuhr'um*, for *fuh um* (for them).

Final *d* or *t* is dropped or slurred:[a] Bandon' (abandoned), Babtis', buss', fiel'-han'.

An initial *u* is added before *u* (with a vanishing *y* sound), as in Newinted States, Nyankee, nyung, nyounges', nyuse, nyuzen' (usen't).

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[a]As always in the best company. R's are seen and not heard.
[a]Likewise in general usage.

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193 Preceded by a vowel an initial *y* sound is added to *i*
194 and *e*. Thus *iz* and *ent* become *yiz* and *yent*. *Him is*, but *'e yiz; him ent*, but *'e yent; 'e yeye red.*.

Initial *s* is dropped in the hard consonant combinations *sc, sp, sk, st.*

'Cratch, 'crape, 'kin, 'corch, 'tan, 'tink, 'take, 'tir, 'top, 'ting, 'tep, 'ticky, 'traight, 'tring, 'tretch-out, 'tir, 'pin, 'pat, 'pit, 'plash, 'pend, 'tore.

Prefixes

193 Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped, as *at-, o-, ap-, e-, re-, op-, ad-, ex-, dis-, as-, con-*, etc.

'Ten, 'tenshun (for attend or intend, attention, intention), 'pinion (opinion), 'pint, 'pintment (appoint, appointment), 'pistle (epistle), 'jeck' (reject, object), 'tack, 'taguhnize (antagonize), 'mirashun (admiration), 'scusshun (excursion), 'spishun, 'spize, 'splain, 'spon', 'spose (suppose, expose), 'spute, 'stonish, 'stead'ub (instead of), 'stracted, 'struckshun (construction, destruction).

The prefix *re-* is the favorite, being sometimes retained when the others are dropped, and frequently being substituted for other less euphonious prefixes:

Recishun (for decision); refen' (defend), remonia (pneumonia), renite (unite), repeah (appear), repose (oppose), resplain (explain), refen ('fen', defend). "Anoint" becomes *'nint*, but the pastor is the *Lord's renointed.*

Survivals (Archaisms)

192 *Fo'punce* and *seb'npunce chickens*, to indicate the size of a chicken sold for those amounts before the Revolutionary War.

Coz, cuz, or *cuzn* as a form of address, like the Elizabethan "coz".

Jook in the sense of jab or jabbed.

Tittie or *tittuh* for sister.

Toad for a young female dog.

Tosey, as a diminutive of "toad," as a humorous nickname for man or woman.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 never speaks the words of a song as he sings them.[11] To catch what is sung is diffi-
126 cult, but it is the only way that the tricky rhythm of a song can be learned. Any person who wishes to give an authentic presentation must be respectful of the older Negroes' disregard of our rules of spelling, pronunciation, and punctuation, and above all resist the temptation to use a formula. As the editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* say in their preface: "The remarks upon the dialect which follow have reference . . . almost exclusively to a few plantations at the northern end of St. Helena Island [South Carolina]. They will, no doubt, apply in a greater or less degree to the entire region of the southeasterly slave States, but not to other portions of the South. It should also be understood that the corruptions and peculiarities here described are not universal, even here. There are all grades, from the rudest field-hands to mechanics and house-servants, who speak with a considerable degree of correctness." These words apply perfectly to the types of dialect found on the Georgia coast, and explain the lack of consistency in the songs of this collection.

533 Few people realize that the slaves—like their African cousins—sang on every possible occasion. Religious ceremonies, as well as work and play, were all conducted to music. Naturally there were times when singing was a solo matter—as over the wash-tub—but the Negroes have always been gregarious (private life as we know it has never been popular among them), and it is no wonder their singing reflects this characteristic. In consequence it is particularly important to know how each of the two or three outstanding singers handles his contribution to the effect produced by the group. It seems to me that Creighton Churchill has succeeded admirably in conveying this idea—but as he frankly says, the whole problem is one of approximation. When it comes to reproducing peculiarities of African music and tones for which we have no symbols, we are out of luck. As Fenner indicates, the best we can do is to listen to an accredited singer.

Those who sing in the traditional manner never appear to take breath when

[11] *Syllables are frequently divided arbitrarily to suit the rhythmic needs of a tune. Sometimes the last syllable of a word is attached to the one-syllable word that follows, and whole syllables are occasionally omitted. The slave disliked certain sounds in the English language. Th was difficult for him to pronounce, so was final g, and he dropped an r whenever it interfered with fluency. It is no wonder that a white man cannot compose an authentic slave song, for the transplanted African thought in the speech pattern of his native land, and employed his limited English in that fashion. He also disregarded genders as he did in Africa. On Hilton Head, South Carolina, the dialect of the Negroes sounds—at a little distance—like a foreign tongue because of its curiously different emphasis and intonation. Close at hand, however, the meaning becomes clear enough.*

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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ELI AH CAN'T STAN'

Hate that [9] sin that made me moan
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Chorus: Hay John—John's on nuh [10] islun
Hay John—E-li Ah can't stan'! [11]

* * *

John's on the isle uh Pat-te-mos
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Take one brick out Satan's wall
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
Satan's wall come tumblin' down
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
One a these days I'm goin' away
Eli—can't stan'!
Won't be back 'till judgment day
Eli—can't stan'!

[194]

[9] *"That" sounds like "tat," and "Ah" sounds very like a short "eh."*
[10] *"The"—following a final "n"—has the sound of "nuh."*
[11] *The chorus is repeated after every two or three verses.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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example, which are often attributed to climate or lassitude or to the influence of the Negro, are merely the continuation of the speech patterns of the English who settled the South Atlantic coast.[8] The Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well. White speech has undergone some degree of change, moving a little nearer, perhaps, toward a standard American English, but, because of cultural isolation, the Negro lags behind, thus conserving the white man's linguistic past.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DIALECT

There is considerable variation to be found in the printed records of Gullah dialect. Part of this is due to the local and individual variations in phonology and part is due to the personal element of the recorder. The

with the plain people, who go on talking as they did in Shakespeare's day. There were several dialect areas, the major areas being the Scotch or Northern, the Midland, the Eastern, the Southern, and the Southwestern. Coastal New England, Virginia, and South Carolina were settled largely from southern, southeastern, and southwestern England. More than a hundred years later the northern English and Scotch-Irish poured into America, dominating the pronunciation of the North and West, but not modifying greatly the speech of the oldest section of New England. The Scotch-Irish came into the South from the Middle States via the Shenandoah Valley, settling the piedmont and mountain regions. Spoken English in the latter sections is now a blend of the Scotch-Irish type with the southern English type which pushed westward from the Atlantic coast settlements in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. For a suggestive article setting forth a similar point of view, see Hans Kurath, "The Origins of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.

[8] Take the Southern *r* for example. The Negro had nothing to do with our losing it. References to the distinction between the rough or Scotch *r* and the smooth or southern English *r* occurred in the grammars and dictionaries of three hundred years ago. Evidence drawn from rhyming words and from plays written in dialect shows that the *r* of lower England was the same as our Southern *r*. A later reference in the third edition (1823) of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* is interesting: "In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *lard, bard, card, regard*, etc., is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *laad, baad, caad, regaad*." (Quoted by Kurath, *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.)

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speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

The following specimens will not only serve to introduce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

I[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

[1] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

[10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

PHONOLOGY[15]

Vowels

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data.

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• 194 comes *laak*, *spark* is *spaak*, and *palm* is *paam*. These flat *a* sounds are merely survivals of English dialect speech.[16] They are still found in England, and they are common among the low-country white people in South Carolina.[17] Their frequency gives a flat tinge to the whole Gullah dialect.

In words like *father*, *water*, *watch*, the *a*, not being affected by an *r* or an *l*, is pronounced practically the same as in standard English, although local and individual variations occur, ranging from the flat *a* of the type mentioned above to the broad *a* of *father*.

(*a*, as in *hat*)

Many words which in the standard language have this sound of *a* have in Gullah the broad *a*, as in *father*. Acoustically this sound is about the same as the *o* in *hot*, *pot*, etc. Thus we hear *mon*, *bock*, *plont*, *robbit*, *foctry*, for *man*, *back*, *plant*, *rabbit*, *factory*. This *a* sound gives some strange effects when used with words having the flat *a*. Thus *daak mon* for *dark man*, *maash lon* for *marsh land*. Occasionally *back* is pronounced *beck* [pɛt]. In England the prevailing sound of *a* in these words was broad, with a sprinkling of narrow *a* in the southern counties.

[128] In order that the general reader may not be disturbed over phonetic symbols which mean nothing to him, I have not used any symbols other than the conventional alphabet. However, by means of bracketed words I have tried to describe the various sounds accurately, so that any phoneticist may translate them into his system if he desires. A word inclosed in brackets indicates the vowel sound meant in a certain spelling. For example, the statement that "*cost* is pronounced *caust* [kaust]" means that the vowel sound *au* is to be pronounced exactly like the *au* in *haul*.

[16] See *English Dialect Grammar*, Chap. i, also pp. 30-32, also index under various words having this *a* sound. Hereafter this work will be referred to in footnotes as *E. D. G.*

[17] *Paa* and *maa* for *pa* and *ma*, *maash* for *marsh*, and many others are frequent.

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(*a, ea, ai,* as in *take, great, wait*)

Words like *bake, take, wait, great,* etc., are pronounced as if the vowel were the *e* in *get, pet,* etc. Thus *bek, tek, wet, gret.* One hears in the spirituals that "heaven is a beautiful *pless*," and that "I'm on my *weh, prez* de Lawd, I'm on my *weh.*" The source of these pronunciations is again the English dialects. For example, the *English Dialect Grammar* records fifteen pronunciations of *bake,* ten of which have the *e* [get] sound or a very close approximation to it. These occur chiefly in the midland, southern, and southwestern counties.

(*e, ea,* as in *bed, dead*)

A few words which have this sound in the standard language have almost the sound of *ai* as in *pail, nail.* Thus *baid, baig, daid, haid,* for *bed, beg, dead, head.* These pronunciations, according to the *English Dialect Grammar,* are still common in England. They are found in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northampton, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Somerset, and Devonshire.

There are some interesting exceptions, however, in the pronunciation of this vowel sound. For example, for *instead,* some Negroes would say *instid* or *stid,* others would give the vowel the standard pronunciation. For *yellow* it would be difficult to find anything but *yalluh; get* is invariably *git,* and *deaf* is always *deef.* These variations are all rooted in English dialect pronunciations. *Stid* and *stead* were of about equal popularity in England.[18] *Yalluh* and *yawluh* were so common as to leave room for few other pronunciations of *yellow.*[19] As for *get,* Wright has

[18] *E. D. G.,* index, p. 618.

[19] *E. D. G.,* pp. 692-93.

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•194 not recorded a single instance of the *e* being changed to *ai* [*pail*], but *git* occurs in Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Leicester, Worcester, Buckingham, Bedford, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Isle of Wight, Somerset, Devonshire, Cornwall, and parts of Ireland.[20] *Deef* for *deaf* occurs in practically all of the above counties and in the following besides: Stratford, Derby, Northampton, Shropshire, Pembroke, Gloucester, Cambridge, Essex, Dorset.[21] With such an incidence the Negro could hardly have escaped saying *git* and *deef*.

(*e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, plus *r*, as in *certain*, *circle*, *word*, *church*)

Words having this vowel sound are generally pronounced in the Gullah with the sound of *uh*, like the *u* in *bud*. Thus *sutn* for *certain*, *sukkle* for *circle*, *wud* for *word*, *chuch* for *church*, etc. These are all English dialect pronunciations, arising from the effect of the *r* following these vowels. The *English Dialect Grammar* shows these pronunciations to be common at present in the south midland and southern English dialects. For example, *bird* is listed under seven pronunciations, three of which might be represented by *bahd*, *bawd*, and *brid*. The others are all *bud*, or very close approximations to it, and they are found in midland and southern England. Similarly, eighteen pronunciations of *word* are listed, eleven of which, found in all sections below Northumbria, are like the Gullah *wud*.

In a few words of this class we find alongside the *uh* sound other pronunciations which reflect the Negro's tend-

[20] *E. D. G.*, p. 460.

[21] *E. D. G.*, p. 400. *Git* and *Deef* are, of course, still widely used by uneducated white people in the United States.

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ency to take over exactly the pronunciation with which he came in contact. Thus besides *sutn* for *certain*, we also find *sartn*, *sairtn* (the *r* is actually pronounced!); besides *subbunt* for *servant*, also *sarbunt*, *sairbunt*, *saabunt*, etc.; besides *such* for *search*, also *sarch*, *saach*, etc. One thinks immediately of the Englishman's *Darby*, *Hartford*, *clark*, for *Derby*, *Hertford*, *clerk*, and of the pronunciation of *vermin* as *varmint*, so common among uneducated whites in this country. In fact, all of the pronunciations of this sort in the Gullah are also found in various parts of the country among illiterate whites.

(*i*, *y*, as in *hit*, *physic*)

Words having this vowel sound are ordinarily pronounced as in standard English. Such exceptions as exist are easily accounted for by English dialect. For instance, *feesh* and *fush* [push] for *fish* are sometimes heard, likewise *deesh* for *dish*, *sperit* [merit] for *spirit*, and *leetle* for *little*. Wright states that in England *i* has been lengthened to *ee* before *sh* in words like *fish* and *dish* in parts of Lancashire, Derby, Norfolk, Somerset, and Devon.[22] *Sperit* for *spirit* is common in parts of Lancashire, Lincoln, Worcester, Gloucester, and Oxford.[23]

(*o*, *oa*, as in *note*, *coat*)

Words having this vowel sound are generally given the standard pronunciation, except that occasionally there is a tinge of the sound of *u* as in *but*. Hence *goat* may sound like *guet* (*u* as in *but*, *e* unstressed).[24]

[22] *E. D. G.*, p. 71. [23] *E. D. G.*, p. 183.

[24] This pronunciation noted in the *E. D. G.*, p. 188, as found in several counties in words like *coat*, *coach*, *roam*, *pony*.

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(*o, a,* as in *not, was*)

•194 This sound does not differ much from the standard. *Was* and *what* become *wus* and *whut*, but these are about as common among illiterate whites as among Negroes. Words like *cost, lost, coffin,* become *caust* [haul], *laust, caufin.* These are such good white pronunciations that many people would not understand why any distinction is made between *cost* and *caust.* In this connection it is interesting to note that Wright says that this short *o* sound has been lengthened into the *au* sound in the south midland, southern, eastern, and southwestern English dialects.[25]

(*ou, ow,* as in *out, cow*)

Most words having this vowel sound are given the standard pronunciation. However, *cow* is usually pronounced *coe* [toe] and *sow* is usually *soe.* These pronunciations were common in midland and southern England.[26]

(*oi, oy,* as in *oil, oyster*)

This vowel becomes *i* [pile]. Thus *oil* is *ile, boil* is *bile,*[27] *poison* is *pizen, oyster* is *eister* [height]. These pronunciations were and are common in England and are still so frequently heard in this country as to need no comment on their occurrence in the Gullah. An exception here is *boy,* which is usually given the standard vowel sound. This is probably due to the fact that in England the *i* sound in this word was not nearly as widely used as in the other *oi* and *oy* words.[28]

[25] *E. D. G.*, p. 184.
[26] See *E. D. G.*, index, under *sow*, etc.
[27] Samuel Johnson wrote: "*Bile:* this is generally spelt *boil*, but, I think, less properly."
[28] *E. D. G.*, index, under *boy, oil*, etc.

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(*u, o, oo, ou*, as in *rule, who, food, you*)

This vowel is the same in the Gullah as in literary English, except that *to* is pronounced *toe* [hoe] and *you* is sometimes *yoe*. This pronunciation also survives among many of the old white families of the low country.

(*u, ou*, as in *brush, touch*)

When this sound occurs in initial *un*, it becomes *on*. Thus *oncommon, onbutton, onlock*, etc. This pattern came from the English dialects. In various dialect glossaries and in *The English Dialect Dictionary* are found *un*-words spelled with *on*, as *onaccountable, onchoke, onderground, oncouth*, and numerous others.

In words where this vowel follows a consonant it usually becomes *e* [met][29]. The chief examples of this kind are *brush, judge, just, touch*, which are pronounced *bresh, jedge, jest* (also *jist*), *tetch*. These are all of English dialect descent[30] and are common among illiterate whites in the South.

With insignificant exceptions, the remaining vowel sounds are the same in Gullah as in standard English. It is little short of remarkable how the vowel pronunciations in the Gullah correlate with the deviations of English dialect from the standard language. I have yet to find an example of a pronunciation, other than an individual idiosyncrasy, which is not easily explicable on the basis of midland and southern English dialect.

[29] And in a few words *i* [*sit*]. Thus *jist* for *just, kiver* for *cover*. These pronunciations are general in the dialects of England, Scotland, and Ireland. See *E. D. G.*, p. 192.

[30] *E. D. G.*, index, under the various words having this vowel sound, also p. 192.

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Consonants

•194 [128] The points wherein the consonants in the dialect differ from the standard language will now be indicated. For simplicity I am taking the consonants in alphabetical order rather than classifying them as liquids, labials, gutturals, etc., as is sometimes done.

b. This consonant is sometimes omitted in the medial position in words such as *nummuh*, number, *rammle*, ramble, *grumlin*, grumbling, etc. Similar pronunciations are found among uncultivated whites, who inherited them from England. Wright says, *b* "hardly ever occurs in any of the dialects between *m-l* or *m-r* in such words as *bramble, thimble, chamber, number.*"[31]

In some words medial *b* is changed to *v*. Thus *navuh*, neighbor, *lavuh*, labor.[32] A *b* is nearly always found in chimney: *chimbly*.[33]

c. This consonant has generally remained the same as in standard English.

d. In a few words *d* has become *j*: *ijuh*, idea, *jew*, dew, *jues*, dues, *Injun*, Indian, etc.[34] Medial *d* is omitted in some words, e. g., *bunnle*, bundle, *cannle*, candle, *chillun*, children, etc.[35] Final *d* is omitted in a great many words where *d* follows *n* or *l*, as in band, bind, blind, fold, bold, hand, land, wind, etc. This is common among American white people and was brought over from the

[31] Elizabeth Mary Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore*, p. 135.

[32] Gonzales reports these in his glossary in *The Black Border*. They are not at all common on St. Helena. A parallel is found in the widespread English dialect pronunciation, *marvel* for *marble*. See Wright, *Rustic Speech*, p. 135.

[33] Very common in England.

[34] *Cf.* Wright, *Dialect Grammar*, p. 211, for identical tendency in English dialect.

[35] The same is true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

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southern and midland English dialects.[36] In a few words final *d* becomes *t*, as *islant*, island, *rappit*, rapid, *sallet*, salad, *ballet*, ballad. This is also an English dialect characteristic.

f. This consonant is generally the same as in literary English. In *after*, however, it is omitted: *atter*.[37] Because of the close kinship of *f* and *v*, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a speaker has said *afford* or *avord*, *before* or *bevore*, *if* or *iv*.[38] However, I am fairly certain that I occasionally heard the *v* sound in such combinations as these where the vowel of a preceding word made the transition to *v* easy: "de vamous mahn," "Uh veed muh oxen," " 'e veel bahd," etc.

g. This consonant is the same in all positions in the dialect as it is in standard English, except for the occurrence of an unnecessary *g* in a few words, e. g., *reinge*, reins; *mange*, mane.

h. This consonant follows the standard English habit: in the initial *wh* position it is dropped in many words, but is sometimes prefixed to a word beginning with a vowel, especially when the speaker wants to be emphatic. Thus *halligatuh*, alligator, *w'ite*, white, *w'en*, when.

j. and *k*. Both of these consonants are the same in all positions as in standard English, except that *k* sometimes sounds more like *g* than *k*. Thus *teng Gawd*, thank God.

l. Medial *l* is dropped in a few words, e. g., *a'ways* (sometimes *allus*), *a'most*, *a'ready* (sometimes *'ready*),

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

[37] Wright, *ibid.*, p. 227, says that in England "*f* has disappeared before *t* in *after* in the eastern, midland, southern, and south-western counties." *After* and *water* in *Jack and Jill* were supposed to rhyme.

[38] The use of *v* for initial *f* was quite common in England at the time of the settlement of South Carolina. It is now obsolescent.

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•194 *se'f, he'p.* All these forms are English dialect forms and are still widely used by white people. *Frail*, meaning to whip or lash, survives in the Gullah. It originated in England through a change of *l* to *r* in the word *flail*. It is also common among Southern white people. An *l* occurs in chimney: *chimbly*.

m. This does not differ from the use of *m* in the standard language.

n. An *n* is prefixed to some words, especially words beginning with a *u* or *yu* sound: *Nyankee*, Yankee, *nyoung*, young, *nyam*, yam,[39] *nused*, used, *nignore*, ignore, etc. English dialect contains numerous words like *namble*, amble, *narrow*, arrow, *naunt*, aunt, *nuncle*,[40] uncle, *noration*, oration, *nidiot*, idiot, but practically all such words arose from the *n* of a preceding *an* being carried over. It is doubtful if this tendency can account for all the intrusive *n*'s in Gullah. It may be that here we have a survival of an African language trait.

An initial *n* sound often precedes a consonant in West African words. *However, the Gullah exhibits no instance of intrusive n preceding a true consonant.* Furthermore, the number of words having this intrusive *n* is relatively small. It may be, then, that, after all, the instances noted above either came from English dialect or arose in the Negro's English learning process.

Medial *n* is pronounced as *m* in a few words: *grampa* or *grumpuh*, grandpa, *gramma*, grandma. These were English dialect pronunciations in the south midland and southeastern counties. They are also common among American white people.

[39] *Yam*, to eat. See below for a discussion of this word, which is commonly supposed to be of African origin. [40] *Cf.* Shakespeare: "Nuncle Lear, Nuncle Lear."

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n(g). [*hang*, *morning*][41] This sound, when final and unstressed, as in *evening*, *running*, etc., is always *n* in the dialect. This is so thoroughly in accord with uncultivated white usage in this country that I mention it only to illustrate the point that the Negro pronunciation is not the cause of the white pronunciation. Both are of English origin. Wright says, "Final unstressed *ng* has generally become *n* in all the dialects, *evenin*(g), *farthin*(g), *mornin*(g), *sendin*(g), and similarly in all present participles and verbal nouns in *ing*."[42] Wright lists eleven pronunciations of *morning*, all ending in *n*; thirteen of *evening*, all ending in *n*; etc.

p, q. These consonants are the same in Gullah as in the standard language.[43]

r. No consonant shows better the effect of English dialect speech upon the Negro than *r*. In the Gullah country, as in many other parts of this nation, the general rule is that *r* is seen and not heard. Initially, or following initial consonants, it is pronounced, of course, as in *race*, *rice*, *rock*, *crane*, *grain*, *scratch*, etc.; it is admitted to some extent in words where it is surrounded by vowels and cannot very well be ignored, as in *very*, *weary*, etc.; it crops out as an excrescence here and there in some individual's speech, as in *calicro*, calico, *grano*, guano; otherwise it is heard only occasionally.[44]

[41] This sound is not merely *n* + *g*, but is an elemental sound. When one says *evenin'*, he has not "dropped a final g" but has substituted one sound for another: *n* for *ng*.

[42] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 224.

[43] An exception for *p* is *Baktist* for Baptist, but this is common Southern pronunciation derived from English dialects. I recall that when I first saw the word *Baptist* printed, I was surprised to see a *p* in it.

[44] We usually think of *r* as being omitted by Southern whites and Negroes in words like *part*, *hurt*, *bird*, etc., but it would probably be more accurate to say that

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•194 The use of *r* in the dialect correlates remarkably well with its use in southern English dialects. It is interesting to note here that, after speaking of the trilled *r* of Scotland, Ireland and Northumberland, Wright goes on to say:

> In south Pembroke, Gloucester, and parts of Hereford, Oxford, and in all the south and south-western dialects it is a reverted or retracted *r* formed by the under surface of the tip of the tongue being turned to the hard palate, and the trill being indistinct and less sharp than for the Scotch *r*. This *r* exercises a great influence upon a preceding vowel and causes a following *t, d, l, n* to become reverted, especially in the southwestern dialects. . . . With the exception of [Shetland and Orkney Islands, Scotland, Ireland, Northumberland, and small parts of Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland], medial *r* has entirely disappeared before a following consonant, generally with lengthening or diphthongization of the preceding vowel. . . . In the south midland, eastern, southern, and south-western dialects [final *r*] has become a mere voice-glide.[45]

s. A few words beginning with a consonant occasionally have an *s* prefixed, e. g., *squestion, squizzit* (*quizzit*, to question), *strance*. These forms were undoubtedly taken over from the English settlers, for this excrescent *s* was very common in England, according to Wright.[46]

Gonzales[47] reported several words (presumably from Edisto Island) in which initial *s* followed by a hard con-

the *r* is formed in a different way from the trilled or burred *r*, for a little reflection will show any one who is familiar with the suppressed *r* that there is enough of the sound left to have a strong influence on the preceding vowel. For example, *h(r)d* is not simply *hod*, *hu(r)t* is not simply *hut*. The difference is subtle and can hardly be represented without recourse to some phonetic scheme.

[45] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 218-19.

[46] See *E. D. G.*, p. 242. *Squench, squench, squizzit*, and others are listed in the *E. D. D. (English Dialect Dictionary)*.

[47] See glossary in *The Black Border*, also Reed Smith, *Gullah*, p. 29.

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sonant is dropped, as in (s)cratch, (s)corch, (s)tan', (s)tretch, (s)plash, etc. Such pronunciations are rare on St. Helena. There seems to be some tendency in English dialect to omit *s* in such words.[48] It might have been intensified, however, by the "baby talk" used by the English settlers in addressing slaves. The omission of *s* in words of this kind does not make them unintelligible, and, finding it unnecessary to pronounce the *s*, the Negro would tend to omit it.

In other positions *s* is the same as in standard English.[49] *Shr* in words like *shrimp, shrivel, shrub*, becomes *sr* (sometimes *sw: swimp*), but this is too common among whites to need comment.

t. Initial and medial *t* are generally the same as in standard English, although, in common with rustic white speech in England and America, the *t* in a few words, as *tune, Tuesday*, becomes *ch*: *chune, Chuesday*; the *tt* in *little* sometimes disappears; in a few other words, such as *bottle, bottom*, etc., it is sometimes heard as *d*; and the *tch* sound in creature is *t: critter* or *creatter*.

Final *t* after voiceless consonants is never heard. Thus *fas', las', trus', fac', temp', kep', nex'*, etc.[50] An excrescent *t* is sometimes heard,[51] e. g., *suhmunt*, sermon, *suddent*, sudden, *giraft*, giraffe, *varmint*, vermin.[52]

[48] See, e.g., *cramble*, scramble, *plash*, splash, etc., in *E. D. D. Cf.* Longfellow: "Far below him plashed the water."

[49] Exceptions: the final *s* sound in *chemise* is omitted *(shimmy)*, but this is characteristic of nine-tenths of Americans; the final *s* in *shoes* is sometimes *sh*, likewise *licorish* for *licorice*, both of these being of direct English descent; the *s* in *mouse* is often softened to *z (mowz)*, of southwestern English dialect descent. See Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 245.

[50] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 230, mentions this identical tendency in English dialects. Most of these are still found in rustic white speech.

[51] Same true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 231.

[52] This is a very common corruption in both England and America.

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• 194 *th.* Voiced *th* [*th*en, *th*ere, ra*th*er], whether initial, medial, or final, is always *d* in the dialect. Thus *den*, then, *dere*, there, *dem*, them, *odduh*, other, *wid*, with.

Voiceless *th* [*th*in, *th*under, pa*th*] *becomes t.* Thus *t'under*, thunder, *paht*, path, *t'ick*, thick, *t'ief*, thief, *trute*, truth. While there is a possible African influence[53] in this refusal of the Negro to pronounce the English *th* sounds, it is not at all impossible that he took over this habit from the Englishmen with whom he came in contact in America. Wright records that *this*, *that*, *them*, etc., were called *dis*, *dat*, *dem*, in Shetland and Orkney Islands, Pembroke, Kent, and Sussex.[54] *Bother* was pronounced *bodder* in Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Sussex; *three* was either *dree* or *t'ree* in parts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Hereford, Gloucester, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wright, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Shetland and Orkney Islands; and so on for various other words.

v. This consonant is rarely heard where it belongs. Jones listed only two words[55] with initial *v* in his glossary, Whaley listed two,[56] and Gonzales none. In most words *v* becomes *w*: *wine*, vine, *woice*, voice, *wisitor*, visitor, *puhwide*, provide, etc. In certain other words, it becomes *b*: *fibe*, *grabe*, *hebben*, for five, grave, heaven. In some cases, both the *b* and *w* forms exist: *bery* and *wery*, very, *Benus* and *Wenus*, Venus, *billage* and *willage*, village, etc. The change of *v* to *w* was common in England.

[53] This will be discussed further in the section, "African Influence."

[54] *E. D. G.*, p. 237. These pronunciations are obsolescent now in Pembroke and Kent; two hundred years ago they probably had a wider diffusion than at present.

[55] *Vise*, advise; *vive*, revive.

[56] *Vestmunt*, vest, clothes; *vibrashun*, vibration.

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Wright says, "Initial and medial *v* has become *w* in middle Buckingham, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, east Sussex. . . ."[57] The low-country Negro, therefore, probably rarely heard a *v* sound, and he adopted the *w* as he heard it used by the white people.

As for the change of *v* to *b*, it may appear at first glance that there is some African influence operating, or some psychological law of language working. The explanation is simple, however. In a few words, the English did not change *v* to *w*, but changed *v* to *b* "through the influence of a following *l* or *n*."[58] The chief words of this kind were *navel, eleven, seven, even, evening, heaven, oven.*[59] This change was common throughout the midland, southern, and southwestern dialects.

w. As in the English dialects, initial *w* is omitted in a few words, e. g., *'oman*, woman, *'ood*, wood, etc. In a few instances I heard a distinct *v* for initial *w* or *wh*: *Villie*, Willie, *vink*, wink, *v'eel*, wheel,[60] and in other cases there was a sort of hybrid *v-w* sound.[61] Medial and final *w* are the same as in standard English, except that medial *w* is

[57] *E. D. G.*, p. 227.

[58] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 226.

[59] *Rebel*, revel, *ribbit*, rivet, and other examples may be found in the *E. D. D.*

[60] Bennett recorded *vax* for *wax*. Mrs. Parsons recorded several instances of *v* for *w*. This brings up the question as to whether *v* for *w* ever occurred in England. Was Dickens merely using literary license when he wrote "Sam Veller," etc? Wright says, "There are no examples in the dialect of initial *w* being changed to *v* before a following vowel." *E. D. G.*, p. 207. Halliwell (*Provincial Dialects*, p. 66) says of Middlesex, however, "The language of the lower orders of the metropolis is pictured very faithfully in the works of Mr. Dickens. The interchange of *v* and *w* is a leading characteristic." Of Kent: "The interchange of *v* and *w* is common here as well as in the metropolis." P. 53. Such an interchange probably did exist in the London district.

[61] This sound may be produced by attempting to say *v* with the lips and tongue in the *w* position. The upper teeth must not quite touch the lower lip. The sound is practically a bi-labial *v*. It is relatively rare, and when it occurs it probably represents a transition from the *v* to the *w* form.

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•194 missing in such words as *backwards, always, towards.*[63] A *w* has been inserted in a few words, e. g., *gwine*, going, *quile*, coil, *swinge*, singe, sometimes *bwile*, boil, etc. This evidently was taken over from English dialect, as this tendency was found in the south midland, south, and southwest dialects.[63]

Initial *wh* [voiceless, as in *wh*ether, *wh*ite] is *w* in the Gullah, as it is in English dialect and in some parts of the United States among whites. Thus *w'ile*, while, *w'ite*, white, *w'eat*, wheat, etc.[64]

x. This consonant does not differ from *x* in the standard language.

y. [German and Old English *j*]. An initial *y* occurs in the dialect pronunciation of many words beginning with a vowel, as *yahm* for arm, *yeah* for ear, *yeye* for eve, *yent* for ent or ain't, etc.[65]

A medial *y* occurs after a consonant in many words: *cyaa't*, cart, *gyaa'den*, garden, *gyap*, gap, etc. This tendency was, and still is, very strong in England,[66] and is one of the ear-marks of the Charleston and other South Carolina low-country aristocratic speech today.

z. This consonant is the same as in standard English, except that in words like *measure* and *pleasure*, the *z* sound is sometimes pronounced like the *dg* in bridge.

[63] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 211. [64] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 210-11.

[65] *Cf.* Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 209, also index under various *ah* words.

[66] The same tendency was very common in England. See Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 212-13, also index. For example, *arm* had an initial *y* in Isle of Wight, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset; *ear* in Lancashire, Oxford, Sussex, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, etc.

[67] For example, Wright (*E. D. G.*, p. 214), records *cart* with *y* in Lancashire, Stafford, Derby, Gloucester, Oxford, and Hertford; *care* with *y* in Caithness, Westmoreland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Stafford, Derby, Lincoln, Oxford, Norfolk, etc.

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Thus *medguh, pledguh, treadguh,* etc., pronunciations which are not uncommon among illiterate white people. 194

Loss of Syllables

As Professor Smith says, "Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped as *at-, o-, ap-, re-, op-, ad-, ex-, dis-, as-, con-,* etc." Thus *'ten'* (attend, intend), *'pinion* (opinion), *'spose* (suppose, expose), *'spise* (despise), *'stonish* (astonish), and so on through dozens of words. In addition, medial syllables are often lost, as in *diffunce* (difference), *eb'ry* (every), *gen'ly* (generally), etc.[87] Now it is easy to assume that the Negro dropped such syllables because of some natural tendency toward economy of vocalization, but it is doubtful whether this is the true explanation. According to Wright, such pronunciations as *'bout* (about), *'quaint* (acquaint), *'gree* (agree), *'low* (allow), *'cause* (because), *'sturb* (disturb), *'lev'n, 'leb'm* (eleven), *'cept* (except), *'casion* (occasion), *'tice* (entice), *comp'ny* (company), *diff'ent* (different), *gen'ral* (general), etc., were very frequent in the English dialects.[88] The Negro probably omits little that was not omitted in the patterns set by his English associates in the early days in the South Carolina low-country. 194 193

Combinations

The phonology of the dialect is further affected by the combinational process, by which the Negro utters several words as a single vocable, thus making it inevitable 194

[87] There are of course many vocalic *n*'s and *n*'s, as in *bott'm* (bottom), *heav'n* (heaven), *bac'n* (bacon), *happ'n* (happen), etc., but these are so common among white people that I do not mention them as Gullah characteristics.

[88] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 204-5. Such pronunciations as *monsus* (monstrous), *sartuny* (certainly), *sum'dy* (somebody) etc., will be found in specimens of English dialect in the works of Halliwell, Wright, Barnes, Skeat, and others.

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194 that many syllables do not receive their proper stress. A few examples are: *deseyuh* (these here), *disyuh* (this here), *debbilubuh* (devil of a), *dunkyuh* (don't care), *sump'n'nurruh* (something or other), *swaytogawd* (swear to God), *tummuch* (too much), *wuffuh* (what for), *wus'n ebbuh* (worse than ever), *sukka* (such a), *lukka* (like a), etc. It may be put down as a general rule that any short vocable, especially a pronoun or a preposition, in an unemphatic position, will be slurred over and connected with the preceding or the following word. Thus *here* is often *yuh*, *too* or *to* is *tuh*, *of* is *uh* or *ub*, *them* is *'um*. The latter, being used for *them*, *him*, *her*, *it*, etc., is glued to the verb of which it is the object. Thus *do-um* (do it, etc.), *see-um* or *shum* (see it, them, etc.), *gittum*, (get them, etc.), *t'ief-um* (thieve them, etc.).

This tendency is of course not peculiar to Gullah, but it is more pronounced in that dialect than in any other American dialect. It is found in the speech of uneducated white people and to some extent among well educated people. It is likely that two hundred years ago the English peasantry in the low-country ran their words together to about the same extent as the Gullah speakers do now. Such forms as *wunna* (was not), *nammit* (noon meat), *adunnamany* (I don't know how many), etc., were and still are used in southern England.[89]

Other Phonological Deviations

In addition to the more or less regular deviations from the standard phonology which have been pointed out, there are instances of pronunciations which might be called corruptions or mutilations. Such pronunciations

[89] See Skeat, *English Dialects*, pp. 128, 130, 131, etc.

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as the following will be heard occasionally: *adswocate* (advocate), *bactize* (baptize), *bidout* (without), *cumposhashum* (conversation), *dimmycrack* (Democrat), *disgustuss* (disgusting), *fench* (fence), *muskick* (musket) *ruggidge* (rugged), *shoesh* (shoes), *stustifficate* (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere.

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GULLAH GRAMMAR

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The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case, and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to understand English. The significant points of the Gullah grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the standard language will be mentioned.

[191] [197]

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Nouns

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound*, a year has twelve *mont'*. However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies*, while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox, t'ree*

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192 pronounced *to't*. In Northampton *toddy* meant heavy or weighty. It seems likely that in some part of England *tote* was acquiring the sense of hefting or carrying a weighty object about the time of the settlement of America, and that Negroes and others not familiar with the restricted meaning of the word, enlarged its meaning to its present American form.

Touch, small amount, "a little bit." "Leave me a leetle tetch o' dat pie." "'E got a tetch o' de fevuh." Not exclusively Gullah.

To that, to that extent, so much that, etc. "If you want it to dat," if you want it that much.

Uncle, a term of respect for old men.

Use, to frequent or roam over a certain area, used especially of game, cattle, etc. Used by Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, and others. Heard occasionally among whites in the South Atlantic States.

Yowe, ewe.

Two other words might be mentioned here, one derived from French, the other from the West Indian by way of Spanish. *Bateau*, a flat-bottomed row-boat, is much used in the Gullah. This word was introduced by the French Huguenots, who were an important factor in the settlement of South Carolina and Georgia. It also survives in other parts of this continent, especially in Louisiana and in the French portion of Canada. Another type of boat, the dug-out, is called *piragua*, pronounced *pattyauguh* by the Negroes. This came from a West Indian word,[100] which the Spanish have adopted in the form of *piragua* or *pirogue*.[101] The dialect pronunciation no doubt arises from an attempt to imitate the Spanish trill on the *r*, which gives it a slight *t* sound.

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[113]

[100] Rochefort, in his *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Iles de l'Amerique*, Rotterdam, 1658, mentioned vessels used by the Caribs, "qu'ils nomment *Canoa* où *Pirogues*," p. 347.

[101] Still used in Florida.

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THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN INFLUENCES IN THE DIALECT

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Pronunciation and Syntax

The supposition exists that there is considerable African influence in the American Negro's pronunciation of English. In his *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel comments upon the characteristics of African languages and their possible effects upon the speech of the Negro in America. Speaking of a Negro whose song he had analyzed, he says, "He did not pronounce the [r] by our standard. The lips were brought together more nearly like [w]. Here is an indication of the trouble the colored man encounters with English consonants."[102] Again, having pointed out that in African languages every consonant is followed by its vowel, so that combinations of consonants cannot take place, Metfessel remarks, "So today, even when there are two consonants ending an English syllable, the Negro leaves out one, or even both when they are not necessary to convey the meaning."[103]

The same author points to other examples of African influence. In the phrase "Mount Zion," he shows that a singer carried over the *t* of *mount* and gave it to *zi* in *zion*. "This," he says, "is probably a carry-over from the African languages of the Negro."[104] Further, "The use of the vowel-ending syllable in African languages may have something to do with the presence of the enclitic which is written as *-a-*. As an example, Odell Walker sang *which-a-way* for *which way*."[105] Again, "The [Negro's] syllable divisions . . . do not always follow the authorized dictionary usage. Words like *nu-thin'*, . . .

[102] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 85.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 140. [104] *Ibid.*, p. 32. [105] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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194 177 178 *cros-ses*, . . . *hea-ven*, . . . *Mo-ses*, . . . *hea-vy*, . . . and *li-vin'* or *di-vin'*, . . . have the consonant shifted to the last syllable. There is room for speculation as to whether the vowel-ending syllable of African languages is not the cause of this transfer. Each of the first syllables above ends in a spoken vowel because of the shift of the consonant."[106] Further, "When the Negro makes an attempt at [*bite*][107] instead of [*ah*] in speaking *I*, he sometimes uses the diphthongal characteristics found in Africa. That is, the [*ah*] is touched very lightly and [*meet*] is jerkily given the greater stress. . . . A still different response to the trouble the English diphthong gives the Negro is found in his sharp division of some syllables into two vowels, somewhat the same, as *da-ade* and *cha-ain*."[108]

Most of these types of examples which Metfessel mentions have already been taken care of in the sections on phonology and grammar.[109] Their English dialect origin is too patent to need any comment.

Coming more specifically to the Gullah dialect, one finds such statements as the following. "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic dis-

[106] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 140.

[107] That is, the sound of *i* in *bite*.—G. B. J.

[108] Metfessel, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[109] Except perhaps syllable division and diphthongs. As for syllabication, anyone acquainted with white dialect speech knows that numerous words are divided like the examples cited by Metfessel. The Negro pronunciation will in general follow the white pronunciation in a given area. To cite a single example, most of the people, white and Negro, in northern Texas where I was born said *plan-tation* (a proper division), but in the South Atlantic States whites and Negroes generally say *plant-ation*. As for diphthongs, I think that an analysis of specific cases shows that no general tendency prevails in Negro speech except the tendency to copy English dialect pronunciation. Under the various vowel sounds treated above will be found specific examples of diphthong pronunciation in the Gullah.

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tinctions."[110] "With characteristic laziness, these Gullah Negroes took short cuts to the ears of their auditors, using as few words as possible. . . . Yet, notwithstanding this economy of words, the Gullah sometimes incorporates into his speech grotesquely difficult and unnecessary English words; again, he takes unusual pains to transpose numbers and genders."[111] "They have reshaped perhaps 1700 words of our language by virtue of an unwritten but a very definite and vigorous law of their own tongue."[112]

In view of the various facts which have already been brought out in the discussion of phonology and grammar, it is doubtful if any of the Gullah traits mentioned in the foregoing quotations can be attributed to African influences. The Negro does not take "unusual pains" to do this or that. He has merely responded to the speech patterns with which he was confronted in the low-country by assimilating them in practically every detail. His speech comes nearer being a duplicate of eighteenth century English dialect to which he was exposed than the speech of some of our immigrant groups, say the Germans and Scandinavians, comes to being a copy of nineteenth century English.

About the only instance which might be considered as representing a direct and consistent African influence is found in the change of voiced and voiceless *th* to *d* and *t* respectively. Now, there are no *th* sounds in the west African languages,[113] and the Negro, on first hearing these sounds, would refer them to the sounds most like them in his own language, because, like the German learning Eng-

[110] E. C. Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, Preface*, p. xx.
[111] Gonzales, *The Black Border*, p. 10. [112] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[113] In fact, with three or four exceptions, none in any of the African languages. See Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*.

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194 lish, he would not possess vocal habits which would per-
177 mit him to reproduce such strange sounds off hand. He
178 would, therefore, fall back on the substitutes *d* and *t*. But it is certain that in the English dialect with which the slave came in contact in the South Carolina low country this same substitution already existed to a greater or lesser degree, and it is probable that Englishmen who ordinarily pronounced *th* used the *t* and *d* forms in addressing their Negroes. It is therefore impossible to decide whether the positive English pattern or the negative African trait was the primary factor. It is certainly unnecessary to turn to Africa for an explanation; yet it might be logically argued that, even if the English substitution of *d* and *t* for *th* had not existed, the Negro would have made a similar substitution.

Speed and Pitch Inflection

194 The Gullah speech flows very rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that the up-country Southern white man is astonished at the spectacle of Negroes who do not drawl. It is a question whether there is not some African influence here. It is certain that the English of Shakespeare's time was spoken more rapidly than typical white speech in the South today, so that the rapidity of Gullah speech might in part be accounted for on that basis, but the possibility remains that this may be due to the African mode of speaking.

One of the things which impresses a person on first hearing Gullah is the frequent and extensive change of pitch in the voice of the speaker. Whether this phenomenon is a survival of the musical accents used in the languages of West Africa or is descended from English di-

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alect speech is a debatable question, but it is more probably from the former. It is difficult to find anything specific on the musical intonations of eighteenth century English dialect speech. There are occasional references to the "Welsh cadence," the "Suffolk whine," the sing-song speech of East Anglia, etc., but probably none of these is quite the same as the Gullah intonations.

In English we use a stress accent to indicate the meaning of words, and speech melody is secondary. We indicate different shades of meaning or types of emotion by changes in pitch, but the definitions of our words are the same regardless of pitch. In West Africa, on the other hand, there is no such thing as stress accent. There is musical or pitch accent.[114] The same word may mean two entirely different things, depending on whether the vowel is pitched high or low. Thus in Ewe "fu" with the *u* pitched low means *sea*, with the *u* pitched high means *bone*.[115] The combination "ele afi" may mean, "he is here," "he rubbed himself with ashes" or "he caught a mouse," depending on the pitch accent of the vowels.[116] Since musical accent was the very life of the West African languages it is quite possible that the Negro carried over this language habit to some extent and that this accounts for the presence of the unusual pitch fluctuations heard among the old-time Gullah speakers. The survival of such a habit did not interfere with the Negro's efficiency as a speaker of English, for English accents are of the stress type, and any musical qualities remaining in his speech

[114] For a discussion of these accents see Carl Meinhof, *An Introduction to the Study of African Languages* (tr. by A. Werner), p. 70 et. seq. See also *Les Langues du Monde* (ed. by Meillet and Cohen), part entitled, "Langues du Soudan et de la Guinée."

[115] Meinhof, p. 77.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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[191] would be looked upon by the plantation owners as interesting embellishments.

The following graph is offered as an illustration of the differences in pitch range and speed between Gullah and ordinary Southern white English speech. It is merely suggestive. The pitch differences are only relative, since it would require the use of phonophotography to discover the absolute ranges. The left-hand graph represents white speech, the right-hand, Negro speech.

1 SEC.
I don't know, mam.

0.6 SEC.
I ent know, mum.

African Words

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192 Tracing the etymologies of words supposed to be of African origin is anything but an easy task. Perhaps this is why some of the English dictionaries refrain from giving specific etymologies, merely saying that a certain word is "African," or "of African origin," or even omitting these remarks. On the other hand, some writers have been too quick to attribute certain words to Africa. The mere discovery that a word is used in Africa and is different from any known modern English word is not always sufficient evidence that the word is African or that it was brought into English by Negroes. One must not forget that for more than a hundred years before the American slave trade began, European explorers and traders, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch, had contact with various parts of the African coast, and that this made pos-